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ON THE RACES  
OF THE  
SOUTHERN SHORES OF THE CASPIAN SEA.

BY THE BARON DE BODE.

Read December 7, 1853.

IN a former Paper read before the Society, relating to the Turkoman stems roaming over the steppes of Khorasán to the east of the Caspian Sea, I had occasion to allude indirectly to their neighbours, the inhabitants of Asterábád.

I will now, with the Society's permission, pass briefly in review the different races of men which occupy this latter province, together with the adjacent country of Mazanderán.

On the geographical position of these provinces I scarcely require to say more, than that they lave the southern shores of the Caspian, and are comprised in the range of mountains called the Albus chain, limited to the south by Irak-ajem and Khorasán, to the east and north-east by the Turkoman tribes, and having to the west the province of Ghilán, which also lies along the shores of the Caspian.

The eastern portion of this land was known in the Zend texts under the name of *Vér-kánú*, "the seventh abode of bliss:" the Greeks called it *Hyrkania*; and, together with its western portion, or *Taberistán*, it formed the cradle of the *Parthian* kingdom of the *Arsacidæ* dynasty.

The provinces of Asterábád and Mazanderán are very woody; the brows of the northern slopes of the *Albus* are shaded by gigantic forests of timber; the narrow strip of land which lies at their feet, stretching to the Caspian, is choked with rank luxuriant vegetation, owing to the moist climate and the low position of the country, the basin of the Caspian being, if I mistake not, some 80 feet lower than the level of the ocean. Thanks to this circumstance, Asterábád and Mazanderán partake of the advantages of tropical climates. The valleys are well watered by rivers and mountain streams,

and nature is prolific in its gifts. Diodorus Siculus, in his historical fragments on the expedition of Alexander of Macedon into Persia, says, that "In traversing through *Hyrkania* Alexander found himself in the midst of a group of habitations known as 'the happy hamlets,' the name they truly deserve, for no country in the world surpasses them in the beauty of their fruit." The historian then goes on to give a description of the prolific nature of the vine, the corn, the fig-tree, and the honey of the country. We have seen that nature is still prolific, though running wild; but the hamlets are no more happy: the deadly *Ahriman* has poisoned with his breath this abode of bliss created by Ormuzd.

The inhabitants attend mostly to the cultivation of their rice plantations, although corn is also cultivated on the higher ground; but, in general, wheat-bread is not much relished by the natives, who prefer rice, and even feed their horses with the same, in preference to barley. A European traveller must, however, be cautious in tasting bread made of the native flour, as he would be exposed to sickness and giddiness in the head. This is attributed to a small black seed mixed with the grain, which millers neglect to remove in grinding the wheat into flour. He must ask for flour of wheat brought from Turkomania or from Khorasán. Sesam, or *kúnjút*, is much cultivated for its oil, used in manufacturing soap: the grain is also used in bread all over Persia. They have also cotton plantations for the consumption of their own looms: it is whiter and cleaner than the cotton they procure from Khorasán, but the fibre is short. It is the cultivation of the silk-worm which is much attended to by the industrious women of these provinces, although not so exclusively as in the adjoining provinces of Ghilán, where it forms the chief article for exportation. The vine, the fig-tree, the pomegrenate, grow here wild in the woods; while the orange-tree, the lemon, the citron, the *narinj* (a large-sized orange, containing much acid juice), the *badráng* (or cedrat), and others, ornament their court-yards, together with the white-mulberry trees required for the silk-worm.

The cattle here, which is of a peculiarly beautiful race, and roams about almost wild in the forests, and grazes on rich

pastures, has a hump above its shoulder-blades not met with in any other part of Persia, except *Ghilán* and *Talysh*, which partake of the same climate and nature as Asterabád and Mazanderán.

I believe a similar species of horned cattle is to be found in some parts of Hindustán. The hump I have just mentioned is a cartilaginous lump of flesh hanging from the withers of the animal. I am not aware to what cause natural philosophers attribute the growth of this lump, and whether there exists any analogy with the *goîtres*, or *wens*, which are more frequently met with, I believe, in very moist climates, and where free circulation of air is impeded by some natural obstacles. In *Talysh*, *Ghilán*, and *Mazanderán*, which are proverbial for their heavy moist climate, these humps are very prominent among cattle; in Asterabád already less; and as the ground rises gradually to the high and dry plains of Turkomania, to the east of the Caspian, they are scarcely perceptible: it is equally so to the north of *Talysh*, on the western shores of the Caspian, where the breed degenerates; to the south of the great Alburs chain of mountains, on the high table-land of Central Persia, the same law obtains. It must be observed, however, that this lump is more tough and prominent with the bull, and is usually a sign of virility, though cows are neither not exempt from it; but with oxen this fleshy substance is flabby, and deprived of the bunch of hairs which crowns the hump of the bull, inclining to one side.

In treating on the inhabitants, we may divide them into the so-called aborigines, or ancient occupiers of the soil, and the different tribes which have, from time to time, been either implanted into these provinces by the different sovereigns of Persia, or have themselves chosen the more genial climate of these shores for their abode.

The peasantry, or the tillers of the land, belong to that class which are known in Persia under the name of *Tott*, or *Taujik*, the latter denomination more in use to designate the cultivators of the land in *Bokhara* and *Khivà*, the former in *Persia*; the term is employed in contradistinction to the nomadic tribes, called *Illiya*t, and sometimes *Türk*, though not all of Turkish origin.

Among the immigrants may be reckoned tribes of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, Afghan, Belúch, Berberi, Caucasian, and even Indian origin.

The *Totts* of Asterabád and Mazanderán are such as do not belong to the above erratic tribes, and live in villages situated mostly in woods, and surrounded by thick impervious hedges. I may add, that, in Mazanderán, as well as in Ghilán, they are also known by the name of *Ghileki*, a word which, I believe, derives its origin from *Ghil*, "mud"; hence *Ghil-án*, "the country where mud abounds," and *Ghil-ekí*, "the people who paddle in it." *Ghilán*, from its western situation, having been less exposed to foreign invasions, the *Ghileki* have preserved their ancient idiom, which is a corruption of the old Zend dialect; but as the province of Asterabád was always the thoroughfare for the hordes of Central Asia, when they split to north and south of the Caspian Sea in their conquests of the world, the inhabitants now speak a mixed jargon of Persian and Turkish, the latter often mixed with *Jagataï*-Turkish of the Turkomans.

In respect of their moral qualities, it struck me that the *Totts* of Asterabád are distinguished from the rest of the Persian peasantry by a peculiar air of independence. In Mazanderán, for instance, the peasant looks heavy, and as the cultivation of rice is his principal occupation, all his ideas are centred in that pursuit. They resemble, in this respect, the heavy-looking peasantry of the *Huerta* of *Valencia* in Spain, who spend their life on their artificially-watered fields, and so different to the lively Andalusian or the stately Castilian. In Ghilán the rearing of the silk-worm, added to the cultivation of rice, absorbs all the faculties of the *Ghileki* peasantry. At Asterabád it is very different. Here, the villagers being constantly exposed to the attacks of the Turkomans, are obliged to have their minds constantly on the stretch. Habituated from his childhood to the use of his musket, which he never quits, the Asterabád peasant feels that much of his safety depends on his own nerve and resolution: hence the manly assurance which animates his physiognomy, and gives an air of frankness and boldness to his whole deportment.

If the fields happen to be somewhat distant from the village, the peasantry are obliged to go there armed, and whilst one party is engaged in field-work, the other remains on guard, with muskets loaded, ready against any surprise on the part of the Turkomans. Cattle cannot be left to graze twenty paces beyond the enclosure of such villages as are in the neighbourhood of the Turkoman plains, for fear of being seized upon and carried off by the enemy; and it is an afflicting spectacle to see in what a hurry the poor children contrive to hide themselves in the thickest part of the brushwood the moment they hear the sound of steps.

To go from one village to another, the inhabitants are obliged to have recourse to similar precautions; so that their whole lifetime is one continual state of apprehension, either for their own safety or that of their friends.

Hence I found that the feelings of sympathy are more developed among the inhabitants of Asterabad than in other parts of Persia, the common danger apprehended from the Turkomans being the tie which unites them.

Thus, if any of them fall into the hands of the enemy, collections are made, first in the restricted circle of the family, and, if not sufficient, subscriptions extend to the village, the town, or the community in general, to help in releasing the captive, and all take a lively interest in the sad event.

We may well conceive the state of anxiety of parents during the interval which must necessarily elapse before a sufficient ransom can be collected, for if not got in time, the unfortunate prisoner is carried off to Khiva, there to be sold by his captors, when his release becomes much more difficult and expensive; for the Khan of Khiva, who is the chief protector of the slave-trade in the East, and encourages Turkomans and Uzbeks to capture slaves wherever they can find them, levies a tax of twenty per cent. on each prisoner sold at Khiva, and makes a good revenue by it. And what must not be the feelings of those who, after a long and bitter captivity, are restored once more to their family, friends, and country, and the blessings of freedom.

I do not mean to say that the other inhabitants of Persia

are strangers to the feelings of humanity, so natural to the human heart, but with them sympathy is in a latent state: they have not such stirring opportunities to harrow up their souls and call forth those emotions which lie dormant in their breasts. There is scarcely a single family in Asterabád that has not had one or several of its members either killed or dragged into captivity by the Turkomans, and afterwards ransomed, or, failing that, sold into a distant part of Turkistan, and lost for ever. The inhabitants are therefore under the necessity of courting connections in the desert; for it is only by the aid of their Turkoman acquaintances that they have a chance of reclaiming their friends when carried off to Khiva for sale.

When traversing such parts of the country as are more exposed to the incursions of the Turkomans, I used to be escorted by these mountaineers, and a fine set of men they are, and, although reduced in numbers, stand well against their enemy. They are mostly dressed in black, with black *kullahs*, or high sheepskin caps, according to the usual Persian fashion, and with an immensely-long matchlock musket on their shoulders. Their pale faces, animated by keen black eyes, and ornamented with a bushy black beard, gives them a stern and commanding aspect. There is thought and care-worn anxiety depicted on their countenances; and no wonder it should be so. Comparing our own security with the life of these poor people, perpetually exposed to danger themselves, or, what is still more harrassing, anxious for the safety of their friends, how happy we must feel, and how grateful we ought to be to heaven, that we live under the protection of the law and in a Christian community.

The *Hezar-jéríbi* and the *Savad-kúhi*, of which the former occupy the valleys to the south of Asterabád, and the latter the southern mountainous district of Mazanderán, must be reckoned among the *Totts*. During the hot season the inhabitants of *Hezar-jéríb* (which literally means "the thousand acres") retire into the mountains with their cattle. At the approach of autumn they descend into the valleys watered by the *Banaft*, the *Téjen*, and the *Shah-kuh* rivers (scarcely at all known to European geographers), to reap the harvest of their rice and

cotton plantations and wheat-fields. In winter, when snow covers the high mountains, and the cold becomes severe, they migrate with their families into the country of Mazanderán and Asterabád, on account of the climate being so much warmer near the shores of the Caspian.

The occupiers of the *Savad-kúh* fastnesses are the descendants of those mountaineers who defended the passes of Mazanderán during the wars which, according to Persian romance, the early kings of Iran, with their hero *Rustam*, waged against the *Divi-Séféd*, or the white devils, who, to all appearance, were not much better than the black ones.

These *Savad-kuhí* are generally of a tall stature, with jet-black eyes, which, together with their dark hair, give to their pale countenances great expression. Formerly their habitations were lower in the valleys; but since they suffered from Nadir-Shah, in consequence of an attempt on his life in the forests of Savod-kúh, they have retired into the more inaccessible hilly and woody parts, where they live dispersed in hamlets.

During the lifetime of the old Feth-Alí-Shah the military contingent consisted of 1000 armed men; but since the plague and the cholera of 1830 and 1831, which has spared the inhabitants of the mountains as little as those of the plain, the number has been reduced to 700 men. It is the same with the Hezar-jéribi.

The chief occupation of this people consists in the cultivation of rice. Nearly the whole of the valley is watered by the *Talár* river, or the *Talár-rúd*, upwards of seven farsangs (twenty-eight miles) in length.

At the latter end of April the rice-seed, which is called *cháltuk*, or *sháki*, when in its husk, is put into a bag and soaked in water during seven days, at the expiration of which, the grain, becoming perfectly soft, is planted close to each other on a patch of ground prepared and fenced for the occasion. After twenty-eight days, when the blade is out and sufficiently strong, it is carefully transplanted in small clusters into the ground, previously well saturated with water, and usually inundated at the very time the process of transplanting takes place. Men, women, and children are seen, with their



clothes tucked up above their knees, wading through the mire, with bunches of the rice-plant in their hands, and sticking them into the moist earth, care being had to leave spacious intervals between each cluster.

The peasantry, when villages happen to be far distant from their rice-plantations, establish themselves in temporary huts, erected in the middle of the fields on long poles, at the top of which is a transparent flooring, with a thatch roof of rice-straw. The unwholesome air they breathe, produced by the stagnant pools and the continual evaporation of the water by the heat of the sun, added to the fatigues they undergo, and the necessity of remaining constantly up to their middles in water, give to those occupied on rice-fields a very sickly appearance, and fevers, as a natural consequence, are very prevalent among them.

To the *Hezar-geribi* and *Savad-kúhí* we may add yet the *Lárijaní* and the *Tánekabúní*. The former occupy that hilly tract of Mazanderán where the chain of the *Alburs* attains, perhaps, its greatest degree of altitude. Here it is that the majestic peak of *Démávénd* raises its snowy head above the rest, and is welcomed as far as *Kohrúd*, on the way to Isfahan on the south, whilst it serves on the north as a beacon for the mariner far off on the Caspian, or the wandering Turkoman in the desert of Khorasán.

*Lárijan* has a great number of villages situated partly along the valley of the *Lar*, or *Heroz* river, partly on the declivities of the hills, and in the defiles. They are inhabited by a hardy race of people, with limbs well proportioned and athletic with a manly and prepossessing exterior. Their women may be reckoned as very beautiful. Relying on the impregnable situation of their mountain fastnesses, the *Lárijaní* are not very submissive subjects of the Shah, at least at the time the late Mohammed Shah came to the throne there were some apprehensions of an open rebellion on their part. Before the combined devastations of plague and cholera the *Lárijaní* furnished government with 1000 armed men; after that visitation only 800.

The sloping but high banks which overhang the *Heroz* river, some hundred feet above its bed, are turned into fields, and tilled nearly to the brink of the precipice. Their fields

yield good crops of wheat and barley, though the yield is not so considerable as in the central parts of Persia, where artificial irrigation is in use. Rice is not cultivated, but brought from *Amol*, in the low country of Mazanderán; but the peasantry attend with success to the culture of garden vegetables and fruit-trees which prefer a cold climate, such as apples, pears, and especially black and white cherries.

The *Tanékábúni* occupy the western parts of Mazanderán, among the hills which separate this province from *Ghilán*. Having never been near there, I do not know much about them, save that they resemble the rest of the highlanders, and, if any thing, they are wilder than their neighbours.

#### DIFFERENT TRIBES WHICH INHABIT ASTERABÁD.

*Turks and Kájars*.—Asterabád is looked upon as the cradle of the *Kájars* since Shah Abbas, in the sixteenth century, transplanted the greater number of this tribe from the borders of Turkey in Western Asia, to the Turkoman frontier on the south-eastern shores of the Caspian Sea.

The *Kájars* trace, however, the history of their tribe to a much remoter period; for it would appear that *Kájar-khan*, one of their chiefs, from whom they bear their name, accompanied *Oghuz-khan* from Turkistan, and settled in the districts of *Diarbekr* and *Erlát*, as far back as the \_\_\_\_\_ century.

From thence the tribe, in later years, proceeded to *Aderbeijan* in Western Persia and the borders of the Arax; and it was in consequence of the power they had gained that Shah Abbas thought it prudent, for his own safety, to remove a numerous body of the *Kájars* to *Shahi-jehán* (or Marr, between Khiva and Bokhara), opposite the *Uzbeks*; while another body was settled in *Ghenja* and *Erivan*, forming at present part of the Russian dominions; and a third body was opposed to the Turkomans at *Ak-kalah*, close to the town of Asterabád.

This latter branch of the *Kájar* tribe must have gained some degree of power, since we find one of its chiefs, by name *Feth-Ált-Khan*, offering his services to *Shah-Sultan-Hussein*, when that prince was pressed by the Afghans. The cool reception he met with at Isfahan did not prevent, however, the proud *Kájar* to tender his services, at a later period, to the unfortunate son of Shah-Sultan-Hussein, *Thamasp Shah*,

at the time when *Kúli-Khan* (afterwards Nadir-Shah) a Turkish *Affshar* from *Abiverd* in *Khorasán* had joined that prince. It was owing to the suggestions of *Kúli-Khan*, in whose way the *Kájar* stood, that the Nawab *Feth-Alí-Khan*, says the Persian MS., “*was made to swallow the draught of martyrdom*,” meaning, in common parlance, that he was poisoned in 1726, while his son, *Muhammed Hasan-Khan*, sought refuge among the wandering Turkomans. Nadir-Shah, with all his power, was unable to compel the latter to give up the prince: all he could obtain from the Turkomans was, not to keep him in their tents; in consequence of which they placed him in safety among the *Kozakhs*.

At the death of Nadir Shah, Muhammed Hasan returned, and, after reducing *Mazanderán* and *Taberistan*, and fighting with *Azád-Khan*, the Afghan chief, he turned his arms against *Kerim-Khan-Zend*, whose capital, *Shiráz*, he besieged. But being obliged to retrace his steps, *he also drank the Sherbet of martyrdom*, at *Ashref*, in *Mazanderán*, which was administered to him by the hands of two or three persons of the *Kájar* tribe.

“This circumstance,” adds the MS., “placed the country of *Irán* into the hands of *Kerim-Khan-Zend*, from whence he urged on the charger of usurpation to *Mazanderán* and *Taberistan*, and sadly afflicted *Asterabád*.”

*Aga Mohammed Khan* and *Husein-Kúli-Khan*, sons of the deceased *Kájar* chief, were taken as hostages to *Shiráz*. The latter prince returned to *Asterabád*, where, “when some years had passed,” says my authority, “through the revolutions of the sun and moon, the ministers of fate, and the destroyers of the fond hopes of young and old, decreed that the existence of the Nawab *Husein Kúli-Khan* should be terminated through a conspiracy formed by a few *Yamúd Turkomans*.”

The history of the other brother, *Aga-Mohammed-Khan*, the eunuch, who was the founder of the reigning dynasty in Persia, as well as of *Feth-Alí-Shah*, son of *Husein-Kúli-Khan*, are too well known to require our dwelling any longer on the subject; but it may perhaps be amusing to hear in what a pompous way the birth of the latter prince is described by the native historian, being a fair specimen of eastern bombast.

“As the Almighty, glorious and exalted, with the pen of

omnipotence, decreed tranquillity in the regions inhabited by his servants in this abode of change and corruption, to be effected through the existence of this protector of the world, the standard of equity and justice, belonging to the supreme monarch, was displayed in the regions of destiny by the hands of the celestial agents on earth and heaven:—therefore, his present majesty, another *Jemshîd*, endowed with imperial splendour, who was called into existence by the agency of Divine Power, illuminated and embellished this world by his effulgent appearance on Wednesday night the 18th of Shawâl, in the year of the Hejra 1185. (A. D. 1771).

“The nurse of Wisdom suckled him with the breast of Good Fortune, and the guardian of Destiny bound on his blessed arm the amulet of Sovereignty. The reciters of charms belonging to the angelic world, in order to avert the fascinating eye, repeated over his perfect beauty this charm: ‘Had not grace from his Lord reached him, he had surely been cast forth naked on the shore; but his Lord chose him, and made him one of the righteous.’ The ministers employed in the courts of Fate and Power, instead of dirhems and dinars (small money), showered down the sun and moon as presents upon his auspicious head. When it had been ascertained, by the tenor of the planetary decrees and the aspects of the propitious stars, that the child should become a shining sun in the firmament of conquest, and the horizon of victory should be illuminated by his bright star, they conferred on this cedar of the garden of splendour, and on this fresh branch of the rose-beds of temporal and spiritual sovereignty, the blessed name of his illustrious grandfather, Feth-Alî-Khan. May he repose in peace!”

The Kájars, although reduced in number in consequence of their deadly feuds among their own clans, and bloody wars with the Turkomans, still continue to exercise a preponderating influence in Asterabád, the country where they first rose to power; and this influence at the present time is founded, not so much on their numerical strength, as on their family connexion with the reigning house, and on the wealth they possess in the province.

The Kájars are still divided into twelve sections, but the

deadly hatred which formerly animated the two rival camps of *Ashaga-bash* and the *Yúkári-bash*, like the Montechí and the Capulettí families in the middle ages in Italy, has been hushed up since Aga Mohammed Khan, to strengthen his own position in Persia, succeeded in uniting the heads of the two parties by family ties

Since that union the Shahs of Persia descend from the *Ashaga-bash* in the masculine, and from the *Yúkári-bash* in the feminine line, for Aga Mohammed Khan chose to give in marriage to his nephew, Feth-Alí-Shah, a princess of the *Yúkári-bash* party.

The offspring of their union was *Abbas-Mírza*, the late Naib-Sultan, or heir-presumptive. The old head of the *Kájar* race, Aga Mohammed Khan, lived sufficiently long to carry out the same policy in respect of this prince, which he had followed towards the father, by making also *Abbas-Mírza* chose a wife in the *Yúkári-bash* family. This lady, who is, I believe, still alive, was the mother of the late Mohammed Shah, and sister to Allayar-Khan *Yúkári-bash*, former governor of Khorasan. I am speaking of these personages as I knew them when I was in Persia: they may not be in existence any longer.

The *Ashaga-bash* line is composed of the following six clans:—

1. *Kávánlu*, to which the reigning Shah belongs. It is supposed that one of his ancestors had received in marriage the daughter of *Ka-an*, son of *Jenghiz-khan*. For this reason they were called *Ka-An-Lú*, *lú* being generally added at the end of all Turkish tribes.
2. *Shambeotí*.
3. *Azadú-lú*.
4. *Kará-músán-lú*.
5. *Khazínédár-lú*.
6. *Kiaré-lú*.

The *Yúkári-bash* are also formed of six clans:—

1. *Deva-lú*, family of Alláyár-khan.
2. *Kayah-lú*.
3. *Sepan-lú*.

4. Kohne-lú.
5. Dosh-lú.
6. Ziyad-lú.

*Turks and Kurds*—Shah Abbas, at the time he transplanted the Kájars into this part of the country, brought over likewise other Turkish and Kurdish tribes, for the purpose of defending the Persian frontiers against the inroads of the Turkomans. Those tribes were the *Ghérúli*, the *Hájílar*, the *Másúdi*, &c., who settled in the passes of the mountains of the great Alburs chain, together with the *Kurds* (who now occupy the hilly country of Khorasan—beyond the object of our present paper); whereas the Kájars occupy the hem of the desert and the out-posts, such as *Maru*, *Néssa*, *Abiverd* and *Ak-kaleh*. As long as Persia felt strong the above-named tribes resisted, with more or less success, the encroachments of the Turkomans; but when it fell into a state of anarchy—when the bonds of union between the different parts of the empire were severed—when the reins of government fell from the hands of one powerful ruler and were caught up by petty chieftans, who, each in his turn, wished to taste of the sweets of royalty,—then the Turkomans took advantage of this disordered state of things to make inroads into the Persian territory, and seize upon such lands as best suited them. The Kájars were driven back to *Ak-kaleh*, while the other tribes, reduced in number, were forced to seek shelter on the less accessible parts of the mountains, and ceased henceforth to serve as a barrier against the Turkoman invasions into the heart of Khorasan.

When Aga Mohammed Khan had become sole ruler of Persia, he found it expedient to dislodge the Turkish and Kurdish tribes out of their fastnesses, and remove them to Mazanderán, because he found that they kept up secret intelligence with the enemy of the state, the only policy, perhaps, which was left them in order to avoid being molested by their powerful and daring neighbours.

A small number of the *Hajelas*, a Turkish tribe, still occupy *Kúhsár*, a hilly country to the south-east of the *Joklán* Turkomans. There are also a few hundred families in the town of Asterabád, who, together with an equal

number of *Baluchi* families, have the care of the city gates.

The *Baluchi* just mentioned were first brought over by Shah-Abbas, as hostages, from *Baluchistan* to Isfahan. They were afterwards transplanted into Mazanderán, from whence Aga Mohammed Khan established them at Asterabád.

A few *Ghérúli* families, also of Turkish origin, live in hilly villages, in the neighbourhood of *Romion* and *Kalpush*. The Turkish they speak does no longer resemble the language in use among the Turkish clans of Aberbeiján, but has become a dialect of the Yagataï, on account of their frequent intercourse with the Turkomans.

The *Masúd-lú*, originally from *Karabagh*, a Russian province at present, were formerly a very strong clan, but are now greatly reduced. Since the last attack made by the Khan of Khiva on the Goklans, whom the *Majúdí* went to help, more than 1000 families were carried off into captivity. They formerly occupied *Romion*, but at present inhabit the large village *Surkhan-Kúláh*, to the east of Asterabád. The men are very ingenious in manufacturing silk-stuffs.

The *Imr-lú*, or *Jevánshiri*, also originally from *Karabagh*, were planted at Ak-Kaleh by Aga Mohammed Khan, and are of the same clan to which *Dúst Mohammed*, *Khan of Kabúl*, belongs, who is a *Jeránshir* by his mother's side. The *Imr-lú* occupy at present the west part of the province of Asterabád, and may amount to 800 houses, at *Galúgo*. They are a very fine race of men, as are the greater part of those who come from *Karabagh*.

*Berberi and Bengkeshi* — Among the motley population which tread the soil of Asterabád we may mention the *Berberi* and the *Bengkeshi*, who, although insignificant in a numerical point of view, deserve to figure in this description, as they serve to pourtray, in a certain degree, the physiognomy of the country.

The *Bengkeshi* came from *Kabúl*, while the *Berberi* form part of the great family of *Hezárah*, of *Pushtíkúh*, which spreads in the direction of the high table-land of *Pamer*.

The former, as well as the latter, appear in Asterabád like birds of passage on their way to their holy cities of *Kerbela*.

and *Nejíf*, near Bagdad, whither they resort in pilgrimage to the shrines of *Shiyá* saints, while such as are of the *Sunni* persuasion continue their journey to Mecca and Medina.

The fatigues of the road and the miserable state to which they are reduced by, perhaps, the genial warmth of the climate along the southern shores of the Caspian, induce them to spend some time in the provinces of Asterabád and Mazanderán, in order to recruit their strength ere they resume their march. Some families even settle there for life; and it must be said, to the credit of the Persian government, that no annoyance is offered them in the shape of taxation. These wanderers go so far as to patch up tiny huts, for the accommodation of themselves and families, of branches of trees interwoven with reeds, against the walls of houses, or in the middle of a *marjdan*, or public square, without even being molested by the natives, who, to all appearance, are perfectly indifferent that such homely abodes are apt to disparage the symmetry of the place, or interrupt the view from their own dwelling-houses.

It would appear that there exists, in this respect, a kindly feeling at Asterabád, somewhat similar to what is entertained in some parts of Europe towards storks and swallows, who are suffered to build their nests on the roofs of houses, or in garrets, and people would reckon it a sacrilege to disturb them.

These people gain their livelihood as woodcutters, and the fuel they collect is piled up in heaps against their transparent huts, ready for sale.

The *Bengkeshi* are said to be very strict Mussulmans in their own native land; so much so, that a young Benkesh girl will not consent to give away her hand unless her suitor first performs a pilgrimage to their reputed holy shrines. Impelled by feelings of devotion, no less than stimulated by the ardour of love, the young Bengkeshi swains set out on their journey, little calculating on the distance they have to perform, or on the scanty means at their disposal; but as they advance, fatigue slackens their pace, hunger and want check the buoyancy of their spirits and damp the ardour of their pursuit; and long ere the end of their journey can be attained a great number of these travellers, whom poor Yorick would have classed among his own cast of sentimental travellers, alight, as we have seen



above, in some corner of Asterabád, erect a hut, and settle there for the rest of their days, while far away their lovely brides await in vain for their return to their native Bengkesh fatherland.

There is a certain mystery attached to these stranger guests, who, although they profess the same creed with the natives, keep generally aloof, seldom contracting any alliances with them; and the only points of contact which seem to exist between them are the above-mentioned faggots of wood, which the Bengkeshi offer for sale, and the inhabitants of Asterabád consent to buy.

While treating of the inhabitants of this province, I must not omit the *Gaúdor*, as they form a peculiarity of Asterabád and Mazanderán. The *Gaúdor* is looked upon by the Persians as *najis*, or unclean, on account of his eating pork: he is likewise classed among the *Kafirs*, or infidels, because he is said to be without any religion. But how does it then happen, that, notwithstanding these important disqualifications—notwithstanding the degradation in which the *Gaúdor* is placed in the scale of society—he is still much sought for? There is scarcely a village without two or three of these *pariah* families. From whence proceeds this infatuation? Why, it proceeds from interested motives, and that explains all. The peasants have rice plantations, which the wild boars come to destroy at night. Now the *Gaúdors* have the reputation of being excellent shots, and are said rarely to miss their aim, even at night, guided merely by the sound the animal makes when chewing the rice in the fields. They go so far as to assert that the boars have an instinctive horror for a *Gaúdor*, and that they smell him from a distance. It is sufficient for a *Gaúdor* to make the circuit of a field in order to keep away the boars for some time. Of course I have not verified these facts, but it is not likely the *Gaúdors* will give themselves the trouble to set the villagers to rights supposing the fact to be false; and since the latter place an implicit confidence in the assertion, it is not for me to decide whether the *Gaúdor* be not a very precious being, and whether the scruples of an orthodox Mussulman ought not to give way when the preservation of his fields is at stake, and,

what is more, his *rice*-fields, the alpha and omega of his existence, and that of the whole family.

No one could tell me correctly about the origin of the Gaúdors. They themselves believe they come from Hindustán, and their outward appearance is favourable to that assumption. The colour of their skin is of a darker and warmer hue than that of the natives. The expression of their eyes, which with the women is particularly soft, and mostly *à fleur de tete*, as well as the peculiar cast of their physiognomy, and the fine-shaped waists of the females, speak in favour of their Indian descent.

Such as live in the vicinity of towns, or at the entrance of large villages, profess the outward forms of the Mussulman's creed; but the Gaúdors who inhabit less-frequented haunts retain their wild independence, and appear to practise no external mode of worship.

I could not mingle much among them, and therefore was prevented from obtaining a closer insight into their customs and habits, or studying the psychological features of this very singular race. From my Persian acquaintances I could gather but little information, on account of their habitual inattention to matters of this nature.

Some singular customs do prevail, however, among these people, which might give, perhaps, a clue to those who are more acquainted with the natives of India, whether the Gaúdors are of Hindustáni origin or not.

When a Gaúdor, for instance, wishes to marry, it is a received custom that he must run away with the object of his predilection, although he exposes himself thereby to the vengeance of the bride's parents, who can put him to death without incurring any responsibility.

To avoid pursuit, he seeks a hiding-place in the deep recesses of the woods, whither he carries his young bride. Their Gretna Green is the impenetrable shade of the primeval Hyrcanian forests, where the aged oak of the Alburs is the only witness of their vows.

If the parents of the young woman succeed in discovering their place of retreat during the first three days of their honey-

moon, they are at liberty to put the ravisher of their child to death; but if they fail to find them out, at the expiration of the three days they lose all further control over their daughter, who becomes the legitimate wife of her young Gaúdor, for better and for worse, unless it be the pleasure of her lord and master to repudiate her afterwards.

I believe Strabo, in his account of India, mentions a particular tribe, where the young people chose for themselves their helpmates, implying thereby that it was not the usual custom in that country.

I had the greater part of these particulars from a very intelligent young Persian prince, who might well be reckoned also among the phenomena of the country, although of a different stamp with the Gaúdor; I mean, *Abbas-Kúli-Mirza*, former governor of the province of Kerman. It was he who, at the time of the war between Persia and Russia in 1827, proclaimed himself Shah at the early age of fourteen, in consequence of reports that had been spread abroad in some parts of Iran of the death of the old Feth-Ali-Shah. By a wonder his life was spared; but of all his vast Alnoscurian possessions and high expectations, Abbas-Kúli-Mirza retains two modest villages in Mazanderán, in which he alternately resides, much after the fashion the great French "fablier" had chalked out for himself, namely, dividing his time into two parts—"one consecrated to sleep, the other to doing nothing." As I may not have to intrude any more on the indulgent attention of the Society, I take the liberty of mentioning a fact which may prove interesting for comparative geography, but which, in an ethnological point of view, is still more important.

Herodotus places in the eleventh satrapy, among other tribes who wandered along the shores of the Caspian, the *Pausikæ*. These *Pausikæ* are conjectured to be the same with the *Pa-sikæ* and *Aspasiakæ* of Ptolemy and Strabo.

It will therefore be very agreeable for an ethnographer to learn, that at this present day there exist two distinct tribes of *Pázeki*, one of *Turkish* origin and the other *Kurd*. The former was transplanted by Nadir Shah from Khorasan into *Khór*, a district east of Téhéran, and now occupy a large village on the southern slopes of the Alburz. The other

*Pazeki*, of *Kurdish* origin, are settled lower down in the plain, also in a large village called *Pálésht*, not far distant from the ruins of the supposed Apamea, or Laodicæa of the Greeks, in the neighbourhood of *Rhages* of Scripture.

There are also other *Kurdish Pazeki* who are essentially *tchadder-nishin*, or occupiers of tents (nomads), in the district of *Veromine*, to the west of *Khór*. They speak the Persian dialect (whereas the others use the Turkish language), and say that they are the aborigines in that part of the country. In the relation of my journey into the fastnesses of *Lúristán*, which was published a few years since, I have endeavoured to shew that all Persian tribes of *Lúr*, *Lek*, and *Kurd* origin, are always traceable to the primitive settlers of Iran: the Arab, Turkish, and other tribes are all immigrants of later date. Such, at least, is the settled notion of the *Iliyats* themselves, independently of other grounds which it would be superfluous to state here in detail.

Therefore the *Kurd Pazeki* are the descendants of the *Pausikæ*, occupying nearly the same haunts where the father of history had left them; for to this day the tribes of *Véromine* and *Khór*, however they may temporarily occupy villages, still roam about, and, according to the seasons of the year, either ascend the mountains or descend into the plains north and south of the chain of mountains which separate Irak from the Caspian Sea.

The *Pazeki* of Turkish origin may have been a branch of the same root, but who, in later ages, coming in contact with Turkish stems, dropped their own language, and contracted that of their more powerful neighbours, as we have seen above some tribes acquiring the *Jágátai*-Turkish in consequence of their vicinity with the Turkomans.

## NOMADIC TRIBES OF MAZANDERÁN.

NAMES OF TRIBES.	MILITARY FORCE.	RESIDENCE.	OBSERVATIONS.
<i>Kurdish tribes.</i>			
Jombek-lú . .	500	From Ferúhabád to Nazrabád. At Lorim and Meshkabád near Sári.	Nadir Shah, shortly before his death, had the intention of colonizing Hérat and other parts of Khórasán with <i>Kúráds</i> from the Turkish frontier. Some had attained <i>Bígnírd</i> and <i>Kúchán</i> ; others, and among them the <i>Jombek-lú</i> and <i>Modan-lú</i> , were still on their way, when they learned the death of Nadir, and, without proceeding further, settled in Mazanderán.
Modan-lú . .	500		
<i>Turkish tribes.</i>			
Gheróvli . .	500	Bala-Tejen, near Aliabád	These <i>Turkish</i> tribes were transplanted by Aga Mohammed Khan Kájár into Mazanderán from the Turkoman frontier, where they had been settled from the time of Shah Abbas the Great; but as they could no longer defend the frontier against the inroads of the Turkomans, and even held secret intercourse with the enemy, the Kajar prince thought proper to remove them.
Usanlú . .	500	Sári.	
Kelji . .			
Hajelár . .			
<i>Afghans.</i>		Kara-tepeh.	The <i>Afghans</i> were also brought over here by Aga Mohammed Khan from <i>Gurgan</i> , <i>Kolpush</i> , and <i>Kúhsor</i> , to the east of Asterabád, whither they had retired after the death of their chief <i>Asad-Khan</i> , who, with his clan, had remained in the province of <i>Aderbeiján</i> after the other <i>Afghans</i> had been expelled from Persia by Nadir Shah. They originate from <i>Kandahar</i> . Some follow the <i>Suní</i> , others the <i>Shiyá</i> faith.
The above live in the flat country of Mazanderán, but the following occupy the hilly districts of <i>Núr</i> and <i>Kíjúr</i> .			
Abdul-Máléki .	1000		The latter two tribes live in a continual state of feud with each other, and owing to the strong position they hold in the mountains, they pay little attention to the mandates of the Court of Teheran. If I am not mistaken, they come from <i>Láristan</i> , in the south-west part of Persia, and are of the great family of the <i>Lék</i> , who, with the <i>Lúr</i> and <i>Kúrd</i> , are the aborigines of <i>Iran</i> .
Khojévend . .	1000		
	4000		

Independently of the above-mentioned tribes, several hundred *Georgian* families, whose ancestors Shah Abbas brought over from *Tiflis* to people his new town of *Ashrif* in Mazanderán, occupy the town to this day, and live also in villages. These *Gurji*, as they are called by Persians, are become Mussulmans, and a few only have preserved their mother-tongue.

There are some new *Afghan* settlers in Mazanderán, who fled from *Herat* in consequence of religious persecutions, they being of the *Shi'yá* faith (religion of the Persians), while the majority in Afghanistan are *Suni*,

The *Bengkeshi-Afghans*\* settled at Aliabád in Mazanderán come from beyond *Kabúl* in Afghanistan.

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\* *Beng-keshi* literally means *beng-eaters*, as the Chinese are styled *opium-eaters*; *beng* being a strong narcotic extracted from the hemp-seed, and said to be more powerful in its effects than opium.